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TESTIMONY

2/25/16 AGING COMMITTEE

HB-5283 RESTORING STATE ASSISTANCE FOR MEDICARE D BENEFICIARIES

GOOD MORNING CHAIRS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGING. I AM REP. CLAIRE JANOWSKI FROM THE 56TH DISTRICT OF VERNON & ROCKVILLE.

I AM PLEASED TO SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED AND RAISED BILL HB 5283, AN ACT RESTORING STATE ASSISTANCE FOR MEDICARE D BENEFICIARIES.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BILL IS TO FIX AN INEQUITY IN LAST YEAR'S BUDGET IMPLEMENTER. THE BILL RESTORES STATE PAYMENTS FOR MEDICARE PART D CO-PAYS THAT EXCEED \$15 A MONTH FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DUALY ELIGIBLE FOR BOTH MEDICAID AND MEDICARE BENEFITS. THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE VERY LOW-INCOME SENIORS OR DISABLED PERSONS.

AFTER RESTORING THE STATE SUBSIDY, OUR SENIORS AND DISABLED WOULD STILL CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CO-PAYS OF UP TO \$15 MONTHLY.

THE STATE SUBSIDY WAS CUT AT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT AS A COST SAVING MEASURE IN THE LAST BUDGET. PER THE FISCAL NOTE AT THAT TIME, THE SAVINGS FORECAST WAS ESTIMATED AT \$80,000 THIS FISCAL YEAR AND \$90,000 NEXT FISCAL YEAR.

WHILE I UNDERSTAND THE FISCAL CRISIS THE STATE IS IN, THIS CUT CONTINUES TO HURT THE POOREST OF THE POOR, VERY LOW-INCOME SENIORS AND DISABLED INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN LEAST AFFORD THE ADDED EXPENSE.

APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERATION IN RESTORING THE SUBSIDY TO THESE POOREST OF THE POOR INDIVIDUALS AND THANK YOU FOR RAISING THIS IMPORTANT BILL.